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(54) Board games

(57) Four symbols are used to mark the playing positions on a game board with each symbol being repeated every fourth square in each column and row. Each of two sets of distinguishable playing pieces comprises four groups 3, 4, 5, 6.

- The game may be electronic.
- The board may be octagonal and may be adapted for blind people to play.

Only six playing pieces and a pack of cards may be used.

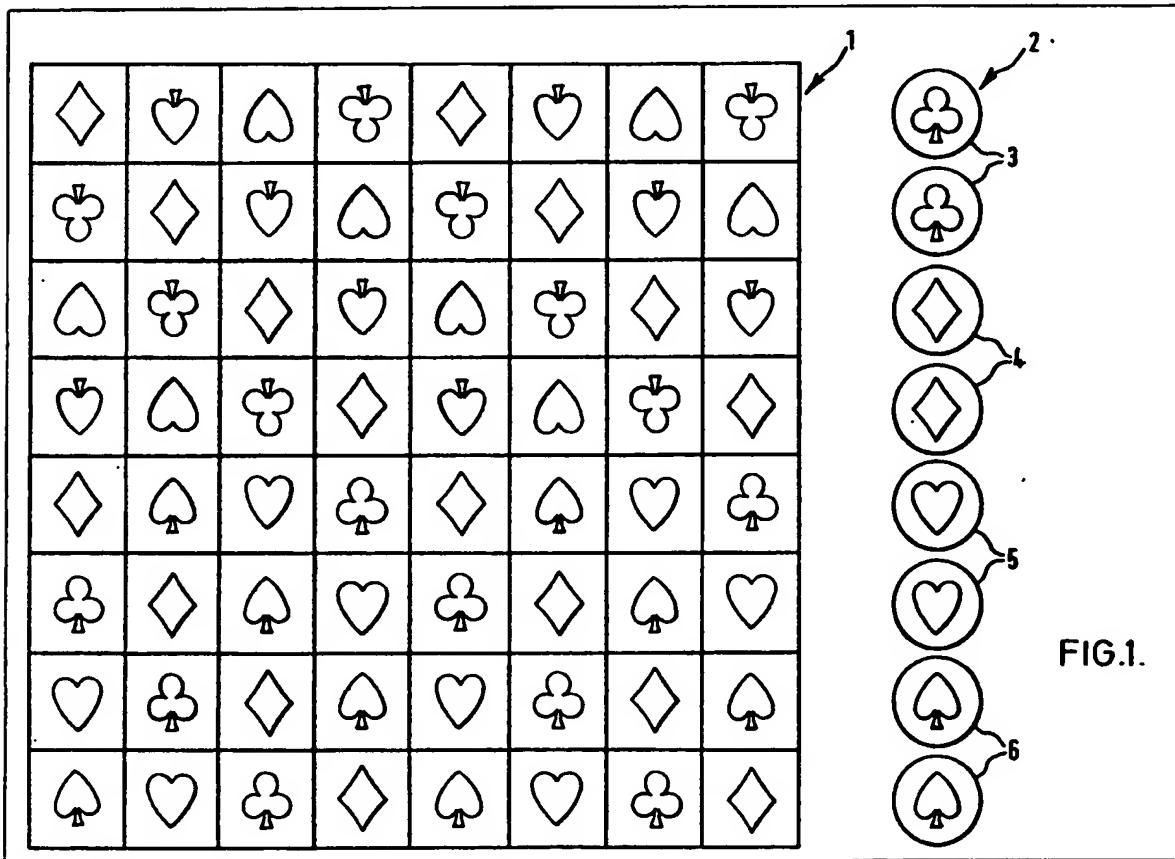


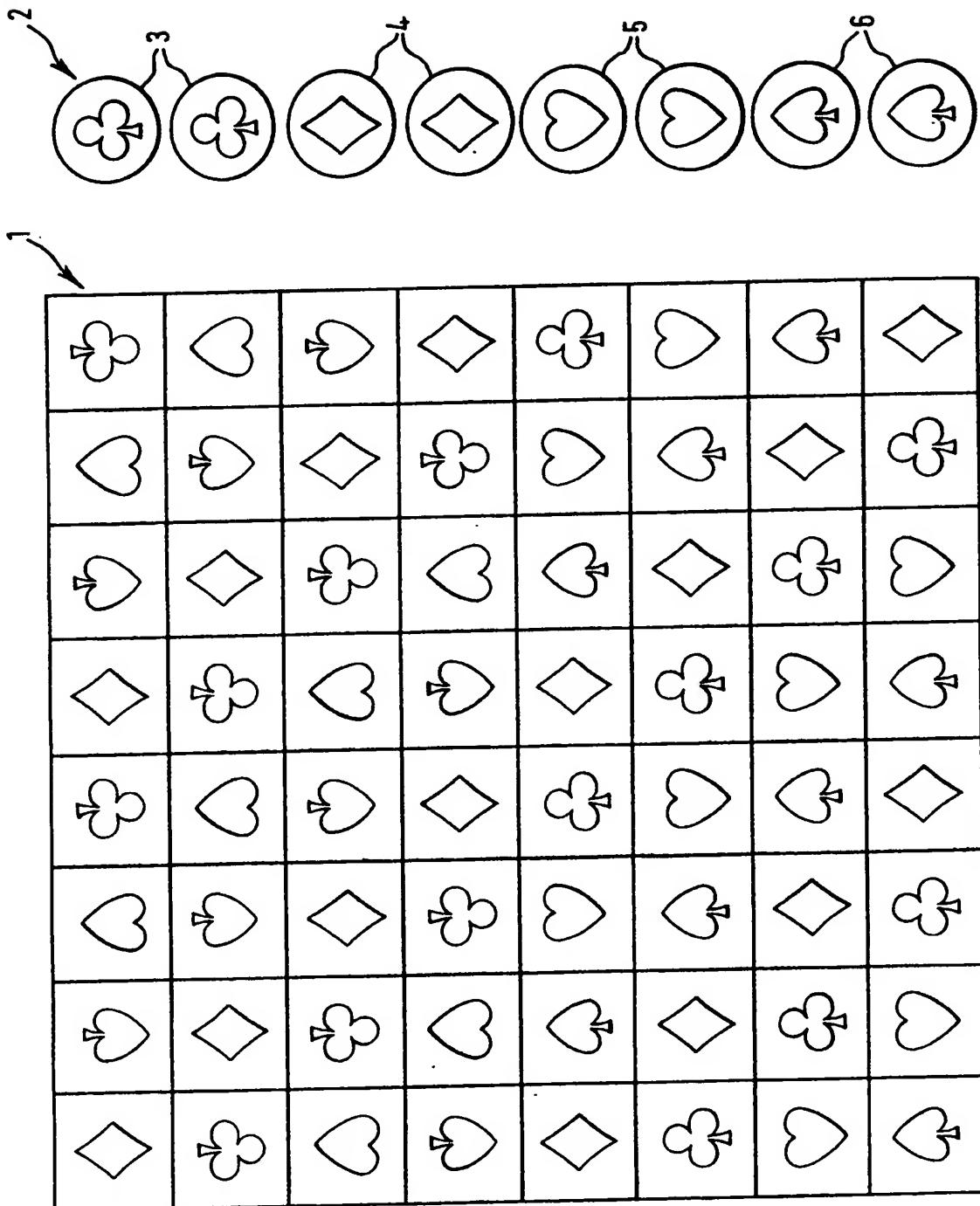
FIG.1.

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FIG.1.



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◆	♥	x P3	y P3	x P3	y P3	◆	♥
♣	◆	x P2	y P2	x P2	y P2	◆	♥
y P3	y P2	y P1	x P1	x P1	y P1	x P2	x P3
x P3	x P2	x P1	y P1	y P1	x P1	y P2	y P3
y P3	y P2	y P1	x P1	x P1	y P1	x P2	x P3
x P3	x P2	x P1	y P1	y P1	x P1	y P2	y P3
♥	♣	y P2	x P2	x P2	y P2	◆	♠
♠	♥	y P3	x P3	y P3	x P3	♣	◆

FIG. 2.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
A	●	□	○	●○○	●	□	○	●○○
B	●○○	●	□	○	●○○	●	□	○
C	○	●○○	●	□	○	●○○	●	□
D	□	○	●○○	●	□	○	●○○	●
E	●	□	○	●○○	●	□	○	●○○
F	●○○	●	□	○	●○○	●	□	○
G	○	●○○	●	□	○	●○○	●	□
H	□	○	●○○	●	□	○	●○○	●

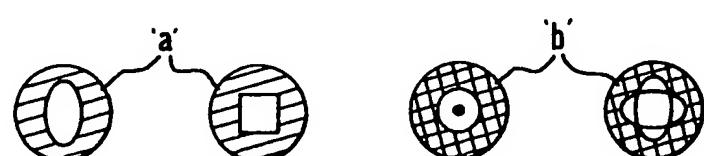


FIG.3.

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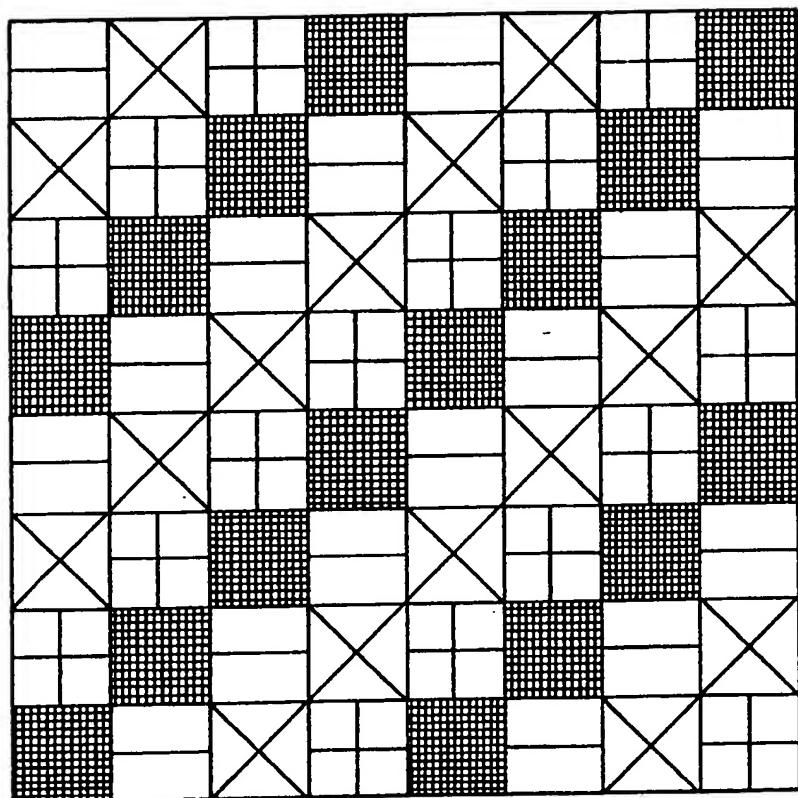


FIG.4.

SPECIFICATION

Improvements in or relating to board games

5 The present invention relates to a board game. The game may be played by means of a conventional board and playing pieces, for instance made of wood, plastics or cardboard, or by means of a representation of a board 10 and playing pieces, for instance on the screen of a television set or monitor of a microcomputer.

According to the invention, there is provided a board game comprising a playing 15 surface marked with a rectangular array of playing positions, each of the playing positions being marked by a surface characteristic chosen from a set of four distinct surface characteristics so that each four consecutive 20 playing positions in each row and column are marked by the four surface characteristics and each fourth surface characteristic is marked at every playing position in each row and column, there being further provided two distinguishable sets of playing pieces, each set of 25 playing pieces comprising four playing piece groups, each playing piece group comprising at least one playing piece marked with a respective one of the surface characteristics.

30 Preferably, each playing piece group comprises two playing pieces.

Preferably, the four surface characteristics are for distinct symbols.

35 Preferably, the four symbols are the four suits of conventional playing cards whose upper surface is marked with a square of rectangular grid of lines defining the playing positions.

The playing pieces are preferably counters. 40 The two sets of counters may be distinguished from each other by colour, surface texture, type of material or in any other visible way. The surface characteristics and set of playing pieces may also or alternatively be distinguishable by tactile means to allow blind people to 45 use the board game.

The board game may comprise a visual display apparatus arranged to display the playing surface and the playing pieces on a 50 display screen.

The visual display apparatus may include data processing means, such as a computer or microprocessor, arranged to control the display of the playing surface and playing pieces 55 on the screen. The data processing means may be arranged to play one or both of the sets of playing pieces according to the rules of a game.

The invention will be further described, by 60 way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a board game constituting a first embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 illustrates starting positions of the 65 board game of Fig. 1;

Figure 3 illustrates a board game constituting a second embodiment of the invention; and

Figure 4 illustrates a board game constituting a third embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 1 shows a board game comprising a playing board 1 and two sets of playing pieces, only one of which is shown. The board 1 comprises a conventional type of playing 75 board comprising a rigid or foldable flat member whose upper or playing surface is marked with a square grid of lines so as to define an array of 8 X 8 playing positions. The board and the array could, however be any suitable 80 size and any suitable shape, such as rectangular or octagonal. The playing positions are marked with symbols which, in the embodiment shown, are the suits of a conventional pack of playing card i.e. clubs, diamonds, 85 hearts and spades. Each four consecutive playing positions or squares in each row and column contain the four symbols in a predetermined order, the symbols being repeated every fourth square along each row and along 90 each column.

The two sets of playing pieces are distinguishable from each other, for instance by using different colours, profiles, types of material, surface textures or finishes or in any other 95 suitable way. Each set also comprises four groups of pieces with the pieces of each group being marked by a respective one of the symbols used on the playing surface of the board 1. In the embodiment shown, each 100 group consists of two playing pieces. Thus, the playing pieces 3 of the first group are marked with a club symbol, the playing pieces 4 of the second group are marked with a diamond symbol, the playing pieces 5 of the 105 third group are marked with a heart symbol, and the playing pieces 6 of the fourth group are marked with a spade symbol. The other set of playing pieces (not shown) comprises four groups of two pieces marked in the same 110 way.

Fig. 2 illustrates three possible starting arrangements for the playing pieces on the board of Fig. 1. Only some of the symbols marked in the playing squares have been

115 shown for the sake of clarity. The playing pieces of one of the sets are placed on the squares marked X whereas those of the other set are placed on the squares marked Y to give the initial position of a game whose rules

120 will be described hereinafter. The squares marked P1 are the starting positions for beginners or for players of normal skill. The squares marked P2 are for more advanced players, whereas the squares marked P3 are

125 for expert players. The rules of a preferred board game for which the board 1 and playing pieces shown in Fig. 1 may be used are as follows. Each player attempts to move his playing pieces so as to achieve a continuous 130 row of four such pieces on any vertical, hori-

zontal, or diagonal line. The first player to achiev this wins th game. Initially, the two players s 1 ct which of the two sets of eight playing pieces they will play with and decid

5 who goes first, for instance by tossing a coin, throwing a die, or cutting pack of cards. The players then set out their pieces on the board in accordance with one of the starting positions represented by P1, P2, and P3 in Fig.

10 2. The players then play alternately and each player may move any one of his pieces in any direction i.e. horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, onto any vacant adjacent square unless the square shows the same symbol as is

15 marked on that playing piece so as to complete one "turn". If any player cannot move any of his pieces, he misses a turn.

An advantage of this game is that, although the basic rules are easily grasped, thus enabling a novice to begin playing the game very quickly, the game and the tactics of playing can become very sophisticated when played by advanced or expert players.

An alternative game may be played using

25 the board 1 and six of the playing pieces from one of the sets shown in Fig. 1. In addition, a pack of playing cards is required. In the case of embodiments of the invention where the symbols are not the suits of a conventional

30 pack of playing cards, it would then be necessary to provide a special pack of cards having symbols corresponding to those of the board and playing pieces. Such a pack of cards should have the symbols evenly divided

35 amongst the cards. A first player who is to play the playing pieces deals eight cards from a shuffled pack to his opponent. The opponent then looks at the eight cards and selects one which he lays face down in front of the

40 first player. The first player then lays all of the six playing pieces anywhere he chooses on the first rank of playing swuares and turns over the card which was previously laid down by the second player. The symbol of the

45 upturned card then penalizes any piece or pieces disposed on playing positions of the board carrying the same symbol, and any such pieces are removed from the board. The second player then chooses another of the

50 remaining seven cards and places it face down. The first player moves the remaining pieces forward to the next rank such that each playing piece may be moved vertically or diagonally to an adjacent square in the next

55 rank. Play proceeds in this way with the first player attempting to achieve as many ranks as possible and collecting a point for each rank accomplished. The second player on the other hand, tries to anticipate th moves of th first

60 player so as to frustrate his progress. If the first player manages to move one or more of his playing pi ces the full l ngth of th board, he deals the next eight cards from the top of the pack to the second player and places his

65 remaining piece or pieces on the first rank

again until he either achieves a target score, such as 25 points, or all of his pieces are eliminated. When all of the pieces of the first player have been eliminated, th tw players change rules and continue playing in this way until one of the players achieves the target score and thus wins the game.

Various modifications may be made within the scope of the invention. For instance, the

70 symbols shown in Fig. 1 may be replaced by symbols of the type shown in Fig. 3, which illustrates another type of board further provided with upper and right hand margins in which numbers and letters for defining each

75 playing square are provided. Fig. 3 also shows four playing pieces, two from each of the two sets thereof. The playing pieces a from one of the sets are distinguished by diagonal shading, whereas the playing pieces

80 b from the other set are distinguished by cross hatching. Each set comprises four groups of two playing pieces with the playing pieces of each group having a respective one of the symbols, as in the arrangement of Fig.

85 90 1, so that a total of 16 playing pieces divided into two sets of 8 is provided.

Fig. 4 illustrates yet another embodiment and only shows a board which is provided with symbols of yet another type. Clearly, any suitable means may be used for distinguishing each of the four types of squares from the others thereof, for distinguishing each set of playing pieces from the other set, and for distinguishing the playing piece groups from

95 100 each other. The distinguishing means will normally be visual but may additionally or alternatively be tactile so that blind people, who generally have a very sensitive sense of touch would be able to use the board game.

105 Although the embodiments shown in the drawings comprise conventional types of play-
110 ing boards and pieces made for instance, from wood, plastics, metal, hardboard or the like, the board game may alternatively comprise a visual display unit such as a television or monitor with the playing surface and playing pieces displayed on a screen thereof. Computers provided with visual display unit or microcomputers arranged to provide a display

115 on a convention television set may thus be used to display the playing surface and play-
120 ing pieces. Further, the computer or mocro-
processor can be programmed to allow the players to control the movement of the play-
125 ing pieces on the display screen, and could even be programmed to play at least the first of the games described hereinbefore as one of the players, so that a single player could play the game against the machin .

125 CLAIMS

1. A board game comprising a playing surface marked with a rectangular array of playing positions, each f the playing posi-
130 tions being marked by a surface characteristi

chosen from a set of four distinct surface characteristics so that each four consecutive playing positions in each row and column are marked by the four surface characteristics and

5 each surface characteristic is marked at every fourth playing position in each row and column, there being further provided two distinguishable sets of playing pieces, each set of playing pieces comprising four playing piece

10 groups each playing piece group comprising at least one playing piece marked with a respective one of the symbols.

2. A board game as claimed in claim 1, in which each playing piece group comprises

15 two playing pieces.

3. A board game as claimed in claim 1 or 2, in which the four surface characteristics are four distinct symbols.

4. A board game as claimed in claim 3, in

20 which the four symbols are the four suits of conventional playing cards.

5. A board game as claimed in anyone of the preceding claims, in which the playing surface comprises a board whose upper surface is marked with a square or rectangular

25 face is marked with a square or rectangular grid of lines defining the playing positions.

6. A board game as claimed in claim 5, in which the playing pieces are counters.

7. A board game as claimed in claim 6, in

30 which the two sets of counters are distinguishable from each other by visual means.

8. A board game as claimed in claim 7, in which the two sets of counters are distinguishable from each other by colour, surface texture or type of material.

35 9. A board game as claimed in any one of claims 6 to 8, in which the surface characteristics and the playing pieces are distinguishable by tactile means.

40 10. A board game as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, comprising a visual display apparatus arranged to display the playing surface and the playing pieces on a display screen.

45 11. A board game as claimed in claim 10, in which the visual display apparatus includes data processing means arranged to control the display of the playing surface and the playing pieces on the screen.

50 12. A board game as claimed in claim 11, in which the data processing means is arranged to play one or both of the sets of playing pieces according to the rules of a game.

55 13. A board game substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

14. A board for a board game, comprising a playing surface marked with a rectangular

60 array of playing positions, each of the playing positions being marked by a surface characteristic chosen from a set of four distinct surface characteristics so that each four consecutive playing positions in each row and column are

65 marked by the four surface characteristics and

each surface characteristic is marked at every fourth playing position in each row and column.

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